



# Orientation to Ontario

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elementary school includes kindergarten and grades 1 to 8. Children usually start school when they are 4 or 5 years old. Some areas have middle school or junior public school for grades 6 or 7 and 8. Secondary school (also called high school) includes grades 9 to 12.

To enroll your children in school for the first time, you need to contact your local school board. The school will assess your children to determine what grade they should be in. There are language supports for students who are learning English.

- Learn about public schools in Ontario by visiting the Ministry of Education at [ontario.ca](https://ontario.ca)
- Read guides to elementary and secondary school education at [settlement.org](https://settlement.org)

## SCHOOL BOARDS

In Ontario, there are 4 types of public school boards:

- English public schools
- English Catholic schools
- French public schools
- French Catholic schools

For a list of school boards and authorities, visit the Ontario Ministry of Education at [ontario.ca](https://ontario.ca)

## FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

All Ontario public and Catholic schools offer full-day kindergarten for 4- and 5-year-old children (junior and senior). Some schools also offer before- and after-school programs for kindergarten students.

For more information, visit the Ministry of Education at [findlink.at/full-dayK](https://findlink.at/full-dayK)

## FRENCH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

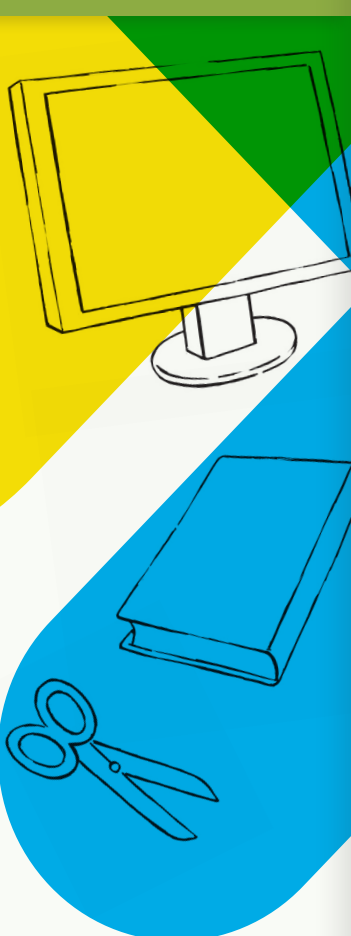
French language education is provided by many school boards to children whose parents are native French-speakers. Learn more about French schools at the Ministry of Education: [ontario.ca](https://ontario.ca)

## FRENCH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

There are three types of French instruction in English public and Catholic schools. Contact your local school board to find out which programs are available to students in your area:

- **Core French** - students study French as a subject.
- **Extended French** - students study French as a subject and French is the language of instruction for at least one other subject.
- **French Immersion** - students study French as a subject and French is the

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language of instruction for two or more other subjects.

Learn more about FSL programs at the Ministry of Education: [findlink.at/onfs](https://findlink.at/onfs)

### SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

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Programs are available for children with behavioural, communication, intellectual or physical needs to allow them to fully benefit from their school experiences. Schools also offer support to students with learning disabilities.

Learn about these programs at the Ministry of Education: [findlink.at/Spec/Edu](https://findlink.at/Spec/Edu)

### IMPORTANT NOTE

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There is no charge for children to attend public schools. All children between the ages of 6 and 18 must go to school.

